

Applicants : Scott M. Hellman et al.
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REMARKS

As to informal matters, in the present Office Action, the Examiner requested the prior art dates for the documents "8 pages from <http://www.ma.man.ac.uk/~hewitt/experiments/html>" (hereinafter Hewitt) and "5 pages From Fluent Incorporated Website entitled "Flow Past a Circular Cylinder" (hereinafter Fluent) and further requested that Applicants review the specification for errors. According to Applicants' file, the prior art date for both documents is May 23, 2001. However, upon review of the Hewitt document, Applicants note that two pages of the Hewitt document, i.e., the pages that include and reference Figs. 5 and 6, are, in fact, part of Applicants' own disclosure materials, which was inadvertently included as part of the Hewitt document. Applicants have reviewed the specification and have submitted herewith corrections to the specification, as requested by the Examiner.

As to formal matters, in the present Office Action, claims 1-44 were allowed; claims 45, 47 and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,014,244 (hereinafter Chang); claims 45, 47 and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,433,924 (hereinafter Sommer); claims 51-54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sommer and in further view of Hewitt; and claims 46, 48, 49 and 55 were object to as being dependent upon rejected claims. As noted above, the rejection of claims 51-54 is based, in part, on Applicants' own materials, which were inadvertently included in the Hewitt document. Applicants apologize to the Examiner for the inclusion of the material that was not prior art.

With respect to the rejections of independent claims 45 and 50, Applicants have amended claims 45 and 50 to recite that the at least four output optical fibers are polarization-maintaining fibers and, as such, submit that claims 45 and 50 are now allowable. Further, Applicants submit that amended claim 46, claim 47, amended claim 48 and claim 49 are also allowable as they depend upon an allowable claim. In addition, Applicants submit that claims 51-55 are also now allowable as they also depend upon an allowable claim. Applicants have made minor clarifying amendments to claims 2, 3, 7, 16, 20, 24, 27, 31, 36, 40, 46 and 48.

Applicants submit that this Amendment and Reply is fully responsive to the above-referenced Office Action.

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CONCLUSION

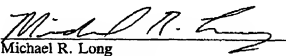
For all the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claims 1-55 are now allowable. If the Examiner has any questions or comments with respect to this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (616) 949-9610.

Respectfully submitted,

SCOTT M. HELLMAN ET AL.

By: PRICE, HENEVELD, COOPER,
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11-18-03
Date


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